News and Notes of Music and Drama

Miss Cornell A Graduate From Stock

The chronic first nighter along Broadway, who sees the Broadway shows twelve months in a year, and the buyer from Dawsonville, Pa., who sees them only every now and then, have lately been asking such questions as these: "Who is this Katharine Cornell? What did she ever do before, and where did she learn to act? Who is she, anyhow?"

All sorts of persons from all sorts of places have made these inquiries after witnessing the amazing performance of this Miss Cornell as the daughter in "A Bill of Divorcement"—a performance that has been stamped by critical opinion as being one of the bright spots in the rather dull gray theatrical year.

"Now just where did I see that girl before?" theatergoers have asked. More than likely they've never seen her before. Comparatively speaking, Katharine Cornell is new to Broadway. Broadway has seen very little of her and she has seen very little of Broadway, which probably accounts to no small extent for the fact that her performance in the piece at the Times Square is so strikingly original in conception and execution.

Out in Detroit or in Buffalo or in London followers of the theater can, no doubt, say that they've seen Miss Cornell act many times, and that they knew the girl had it in her. But there's no "I told you so" for Broadway, for until "A Bill of Divorcement" came along Katharine Cornell never had a Broadway chance.

There really isn't so much about Miss Cornell to tell. But what she has done to date will likely be found in some future Who's Who as follows:

CORNELL, Katherine, actress; b. Buffalo; daughter of P. C. and Mrs. Cornell; ed. Buffalo schools and Merrill School, Mamaroneck; taught dramatic art school, woman's swimming champion. Buffalo two years; skillful golfer and tennis player; first stage appearance Washington Square Players, 1917; first stage line, "My son!" played in stock, Buffalo and Detroit; toured in "The Man Who Came Back"; in London in "Little Women"; in "Nice People" in New York and "A Bill of Divorcement" with Allan Pollock.

The Who's Who now ends there. Miss Cornell herself couldn't carry it any further. The future? She has no idea what it will be, being satisfied with Sydney Fairfield and not desiring to disturb herself with the problems of 1923 and 1924. The dramatic critics, however, seemed to have agreed that there won't be any problems for Miss Cornell to solve, as far as her theatrical work is concerned.

To augment the Who's Who account it might be chronicled that Miss Cornell got a chance with the Washington Square Players because she was so everlastingly prompt at rehearsals. At first the part that she got could hardly be called a "chance," but at a later period she got more work and decided that she might as well go ahead and be an actress. She'd leave the dramatic coaching to somebody else. Jessie Bonstelle saw her acting and thought the decision a good one. Miss Bonstell gave her a job.

Then followed thirty weeks of stock in Buffalo, her home town, and Detroit; thirty weeks that called for unceasing, unremitting labor. From stock she came to New York, stayed long enough to be engaged for Mary Nash's part in "The Man Who Came Back," and toured the East with the Goodman play for many weeks. Then it was stock again and Buffalo and Detroit again and more real experience.

Miss Cornell's next jump was to London, where she did Jo in "Little Women," the only American player in the cast. As has been recorded, it was her work in this part and in this play that brought her to the attention of Allan Pollock, and when Allan Pollock definitely knew that he was to do "A Bill of Divorcement" in New York City he knew the actress he wanted for the rôle of the daughter. That actress was Katharine Cornell.

Miss Cornell's father, known as "Doc" Cornell, did not oppose his daughter's going on the stage, no matter how interesting it might be to say so. He wanted her to act, he thought she could act, but he never thought, as he admitted in a letter to her the other day, that she might some day become such a stage figure that would result in his being inevitably labeled as "Katharine Cornell's father." He has fears, he said, that such a dread thing is coming to pass. Miss Cornell says that it could never happen and that she hopes when her father comes down to see her in a short time he'll like the play—and her part.

And that's the story of Katharine Cornell.

Sergei Radamsky, Tenor

Aeolian Hall, Thursday evening

Mario Chamlee

In "Rigoletto," Saturday afternoon, Metropolitan Opera House

Pauline Lord: The Story of a Hopkins Star

Here is another theatrical star who disregards all the laws of astronomy by rising in the West to shine in the East. She is Pauline Lord, who has been striking fire from the flint of Eugene O'Neill's great play, "Anna Christie," at the Vanderbilt Theater.

By no stretch of imagination can Pauline Lord's biographer make the blithe announcement that she leaped into fame overnight. In fact, the line "She woke up to find herself famous" is usually a pleasant fiction. Most geniuses arrive at fame through "long days of labor and nights devoid of ease," and Miss Lord is a captain in these ranks of industry. Fame has hovered over her standards for five years now. First she arrested attention in "The Deluge," a play that came and went so quickly that there was no chance for the great public to become conscious of the quality of the star's work in it. It came to town on a torrid summer night and was suffocated in the August heat. Both play and star deserved a better hearing, and some day Arthur Hopkins may decide to restage this work.

Last season Miss Lord appeared with Ben-Ami in "Samson and Delilah" and shared the honors of that triumph with him. But though she may have surprised New York by her spectacular rise, managers who had been following her career were not astonished.

Miss Lord was born on a fruit ranch in the San Joaquin Valley in California, and while she was still a schoolgirl played bits in the famous Alcazar stock company in San Francisco. When Nat Goodwin was touring the Pacific Coast with Edna Goodrich, she, by the power of her own persistence, attached herself to his company as an understudy. During the ensuing tour Miss Goodrich was indisposed at intervals and Miss Lord played opposite Mr. Goodwin in a variety of roles. For two more seasons she remained in his company, and through watching him and working with him she learned the technique of acting.

Next she took an engagement with the Milwaukee stock company, beginning at $50 a week, and within a year she became the leading woman. Ruth Chatterton was also taking her primary steps as an actress in this same company, and two years later she and Pauline Lord were rival leading ladies in the cities of Springfield and Worcester, Mass.

New York managers heard of her work, and when Mary Ryan retired from the cast of "On Trial," during its New York run, she succeeded her and so came under the direction of Arthur Hopkins for the first time. Next she was the leading figure in "The Talker," the last play produced by Henry B. Harris before his tragic end in the Titanic disaster. Arthur Hopkins then chose "The Deluge" for her, and she also won acclaim in Maxim Gorky's "Night Lodging," which Mr. Hopkins produced at special matinees two seasons ago. He has now reaffirmed his faith in her by choosing her for the most important woman's role in any play of the season. And Miss Lord has surely justified that faith.

"My Boy" To Be Presented

Jackie Coogan announces that "My Boy," which has just been completed, will be presented to New York society in an elaborate way and the proceeds of the initial showing will go to charity.

Always Orange Blossoms for Ivy Sawyer

It's no use. Ivy Sawyer, now dancing and singing her way through Irving Berlin's "Music Box Revue," simply can't be haled away from the orange blossoms. Ever since the days when Raymond Hitchcock imported her from London to play in "Betty" with Joseph Santley, she has appeared sometime during every production she has played in white tulle and pearls, with all the usual accessories in the way of veils and lilies-of-the-valley.

When she was doing "Betty" with Mr. Santley they became so accustomed to being married at the end of the play that when the show closed they felt quite lost and so homesick for the little church around the corner that in sheer desperation they went off and did it in earnest. They haven't recovered yet, for that was four years back, and it has never seemed to dawn on these young people that their honeymoon should have been over long ago.

When they appeared in "Oh, Boy," the first of the exclamatory musical comedies, they were, on the stage and in real life, newlyweds so new that Miss Sawyer was still in the bride class. In "She's a Good Fellow" they went back to the white tulle and cutaway coat, and even when they went into vaudeville in their "Bits and Pieces" she clung, literally and figuratively, to her bridal bouquet.

When they first joined forces with Hassard Short, under whose direction they are now appearing at the Music Box, they were featured in a very successful vaudeville turn named "Klick Klick," in which, strangely enough, Miss Sawyer appeared as a bride!

The theory that she is the most persistent bride on the American stage is confirmed by the fact that in Irving Berlin's "Music Box Revue" she plays the part of a bride, even though she is first obliged to get a divorce to do it. And after the decree is granted by a speedy and accommodating court down drops Miss Sawyer's little blue wrap to disclose her in the inevitable white satin and pearls.

Will they become so accustomed to being divorced, as they became accustomed to getting married, that some time in the next year or two, when the "Music Box Revue" closes, they will feel impelled to get a real honest-to-goodness divorce?

Probably not, for, in spite of those four years of being Mrs. Joseph Santley, Ivy Sawyer feels perennially, unavoidably and irresistibly a bride.

Goldwyn Has Three New Ones

Three new pictures have just been finished at the Goldwyn studios. They are "The Octave of Claudius," by Barry Pain, with Lou Chaney and Jacqueline Logan; "The City Feller," by Julien Josephson, with Cullen Landis, and "What Ho, the Cook," by Gouverneur Morris, with Jack Abbe and Winter Blossom.

"Love Is an Awful Thing"

Owen Moore, Nita Naldi and twenty other players, under the direction of Henry Lehrman, have been trying to work in a new Moore comedy called "Love Is an Awful Thing" for the past week. But the scenes were being filmed on a steamer in midocean and the ocean was rough, so they all decided that the screen star's life is an awful thing. And sometimes it is.

New Classic for Tourneur

Maurice Tourneur is preparing a screen version of "Lorna Doone." It was Mr. Tourneur who made "Trilby," "A Doll's House," "The Bluebird," "Treasure Island" and "Victory."